

**WEED CONTROL BOARD MEETING
MARCH 9, 2015 – 10:00 AM**

1. MEETING TO ORDER

A meeting of the Cass County Weed Control Board was called to order at 10:00 AM on Monday, March 9, 2015, in the Weed Control Office building with the following members present: Clayton Brennan, George Grossman, Chris Murch, and Larry Wilcox. Ken Hagen was absent. Also present were Alicia Hildebrand, Cass County Accountant; Mary Scherling, Cass County Commissioner; and Stanley Wolf, Cass County Weed Control Officer.

2. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

MOTION, passed

Mr. Brennan moved and Mr. Grossman seconded to approve the meeting minutes from February 9, 2015. Motion carried.

3. AGENDA, Order approved

Mr. Wolf said he would like to add State Noxious Weed List; Landowner Assistance Program; and Continuity of Operations Plan for discussion under the New Business agenda item.

MOTION, passed

Mr. Brennan moved and Mr. Grossman seconded to approve the order of the agenda with the addition of State Noxious Weed List; Landowner Assistance Program; and Continuity of Operations Plan under the New Business agenda item. Motion carried.

4. APPROVAL OF BILLS

Alicia Hildebrand was present to discuss the 2014 year end and February financial statements.

The 2014 financial year has been closed. The Weed Control Fund balance was \$259,102.41 at the end of 2014, which is the fund's beginning balance for 2015.

As of February 28, 2015, the Weed Control Fund balance was \$520,807.27. Eighty-one percent of property tax revenues have been received, and the projected 2015 end balance is \$196,143.41.

MOTION, passed

Mr. Brennan moved and Mr. Grossman seconded to approve the 2014 Weed Control Balance Sheet and bills for February as presented. Motion carried.

5. NEW BUSINESS

Computer Equipment

Mr. Wolf said his computer and the monitor for the field aide's computer are scheduled to be replaced this year. A total of \$1,100 was budgeted for the expenditures. In discussions with the Cass County IT director and in light of work on the Continuity of Operations Plan, it became apparent that a laptop computer with a docking station would be the best option to continue office operations during a disaster or event that keeps the Weed Officer away from the office for an extended period of time. A laptop would also be useful in the field for taking notes

of weed sites, and files could be accessed off-site via a mobile hotspot connection when cell service is available.

Purchase of the laptop computer, docking station, and accessories would total \$1,900, which is \$800 over the original budget for the desk computer and new monitor. The purchase of the monitor can be postponed.

MOTION, passed

Mr. Brennan moved and Mr. Grossman seconded to increase the computer equipment replacement budget from \$1,100 to \$1,900 for the purchase of a laptop computer with docking station and accessories in place of a desktop computer and monitor. Motion carried.

Building Exterior

Mr. Wolf said the paint on the metal exterior of the Weed Control building is fading and wearing away and the east side of the roof does not have much paint remaining. Mr. Wolf said either the metal exterior wall and roof panels could be replaced, or it could be painted. The window in the back room of the building could also be replaced as the weather seals are deteriorating and it is single paned and not very energy efficient. If it is determined to complete these repairs they could be put into the 2016 budget.

Mr. Wilcox asked Mr. Wolf to get bids for painting the building exterior and replacing the window and bring them back to the next meeting for discussion.

State Noxious Weed List

Mr. Wolf said a hearing to review the state noxious weed list will be held by the State Agricultural Department via teleconference on March 19th. A preliminary survey was sent out to weed boards to use as a tool in considering any changes to the current list. Mr. Wolf can request that certain weeds be considered during the conference call.

Mr. Brennan suggested plumeless thistle be considered to be added to the state list as it was very prevalent at the Maple River Dam site. Mr. Murch said if plumeless thistle is not added to the state list, perhaps it should be added to the county list.

Landowner Assistance Program

Mr. Wolf gave an overview of the Landowner Assistance Program (LAP), which provides reimbursement for up to 80% of certain herbicides and up to \$3.50 per acre for application costs, up to a maximum of \$1,000 per applicant, for private landowners and land managers for non-crop acres in Cass County. The Weed Board has a budget of \$20,000 per year for LAP reimbursements, but has never exceeded \$10,000 in payouts. Mr. Wolf presents information on LAP at pesticide recertification courses, township meetings, and on the Soil Conservation and Cass County websites.

Recently, the question was raised as to whether or not publically managed county-owned properties are eligible for LAP funds. Mr. Wolf forwarded the question to the Cass County State's Attorney office. Tristan Van de Streek, Assistant State's Attorney, corresponded with Mr. Wolf on the matter. Mr. Van de Streek said as the

LAP is county-run, there are no written rules or policies other than what is outlined in the application form. The Weed Board can establish rules and policies going forward, but they should put them writing and formally adopt them.

Mr. Murch asked what the original intent of LAP was. Mr. Wolf said the program was created to incentivize private entities to control weeds. Mr. Murch said he does not believe publicly managed entities should be eligible for LAP funds as it does not match the original intent of the program.

MOTION, passed

Mr. Murch moved and Mr. Brennan seconded to advise Mr. Wolf to create a policy for the Landowner Assistance Program for Cass County that relates to its use for eligible private landowners and land managers only, excluding public entities. Motion carried.

Mr. Wolf said he will draft a policy, have it reviewed by the State's Attorney office, and bring it back to the Weed Board for discussion and approval.

Continuity of Operations Plan

Mr. Wolf said each county department has been asked to complete a Continuity of Operations Plan (COOP) to outline directions and policies to keep essential operations running at the most minimal level in the case of a disaster or event where key personnel are absent. Mr. Wolf provided information for the Weed Control Department on essential equipment, order of succession, alternate facility locations, essential telecommuting, vital files and records, vital systems and equipment, interoperable communications, key staff, essential functions, and assigned personnel.

6. MONTHLY PROGRESS REPORT

Mr. Wolf said the most recent North American Invasive Species Management Association (NAISMA) newsletter has an article on the support and funding of research for bio control development. Most research is completed by CABI, a research organization based in Switzerland. North Dakota used to be a large contributor to the research, but is no longer listed as a state contributor. Mr. Wolf believes the North Dakota Agricultural Department should begin funding research again, and Mr. Wolf encouraged board members to call the Ag Department if they feel the same. Mr. Wolf has asked that the matter be added as an agenda item at the Weed Control Association meeting on March 24th.

Mr. Wolf said North Dakota House Bill 1055, which changes language from mills to percentages, has passed. Senate Bill 2144 also passed, but an amendment made while the bill was still in committee added the word "noxious" back in. The bill changed the structure of the mill levy amount.

The total for the women's restroom remodel in the Weed Control building came to \$1,303.51.

The seasonal weed aide has been hired. He works at a music store, which is predominantly operated during the school year. He has requested a bit of flexibility if he needs to complete work there, but Mr. Wolf does not foresee it being an issue.

The township officer letters have been mailed out with only one returned.

Mr. Wolf is providing presentations with information on palmer amaranth at re-certification sessions held by the Extension office.

Mr. Wolf assisted with the presentation of the poster award in Napoleon. He also provided a presentation for Kindergarten through 6th grade students. The students were very interactive.

Mr. Wolf worked at the Weed Control Association booth at the Winter Show in Valley City last Tuesday.

7. UPCOMING EVENTS:

NDWCA Board Meeting

March, Mandan

8. ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 11:46 AM.

Minutes prepared by Brielle Edwards, Principal Secretary